



United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

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JUN 15 2015

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Robert K. Larimore
Chief, Environmental Management Division
Department of the Army
Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-5000

Re: FWS Log No. 2015-CPA-0680

Dear Mr. Larimore:

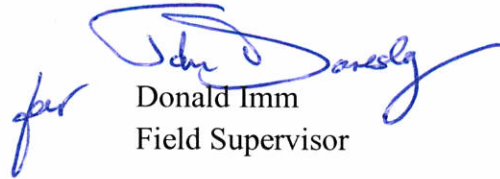
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your May 15, 2015, letter requesting our assessment of the proposed replacement of the current 5.56 mm ammunition (M855) with the new 5.56 mm EPR cartridge (M855A1) within certain ranges on the Fort Benning Military Reservation (FBMR). This applies only to the 26 ranges deemed for immediate fielding of the M855A1 as a result of meeting the Composite Surface Danger Zone (SDZ) screening phase criteria. Our comments are provided in accordance with the provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703, *et seq.*), and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*).

The Department of the Army has determined that fielding the M855A1 will not increase downrange impacts versus the currently used M855 ammunition, and therefore may but will not likely adversely affect the red-cockaded woodpecker. Based on the information provided, the Service concurs, therefore, your requirements under section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act have been fulfilled, and no further action is required.

The Service recommends, at a minimum, continued monitoring of potential impacts during scheduled stand health assessments by Fort Benning Conservation Branch staff. If new information becomes available or changes in the project occur that may involve federally-listed species, further consultation with the Service will be required.

If you have any questions or concerns about this consultation or the consultation process in general, please feel free to contact John Doresky at (706) 544-6030.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Doresky". The signature is stylized with a large loop for the "D" and a long tail for the "y".

for
Donald Imm
Field Supervisor